GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1828
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2003
BIOTECHNOLOGY IN FARMING
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the use of the biotechnology in farming is being recommended to the farmers in India;

(b) if so, whether sufficient funds have been earmarked for the use of biotechnology in farming;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the benefits likely to accrue to the farmers of Maharashtra from the planting of Bt. Cotton?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a) Only case by case recommendations of biotechnology products/transgenics are being made by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee of the Ministry of Environment & Forest after bio-safety and environmental safety evaluations and performance assessment.

(b) & (c): Funds have been provided under Plan/Non-Plan to promote biotechnological applications in agriculture mainly by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Department of Biotechnology (DBT).Sufficient funds have been earmarked to various organizations/institutes of the National Agricultural Research System for the use of biotechnology in farming.Besides need-based biotechnological applications being pursued in several crop-commodity, animal and fishery institutes/centres, there are exclusive centres such as National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology, New Delhi (Rs. 18.00 crores proposed X Plan outlay) and National Research Centre for DNA Finger Printing, New Delhi (Rs. 12.06 crores proposed X Plan outlay) are working exclusively or agricultural biotechnology. The DBT funding for agricultural biotechnology is to the tune of about Rs. 9.25 crores for the year 2002-03. Funding of need based specific project on transgenics in agriculture is also proposed.

(d) As per the observations made by Monitoring cum-Evaluation Committee of the DBT in the state of Maharashtra, the planting of Bt cotton hybrids would give benefits to the farmers with increased cotton harvest and reduction in pesticide consumption for controlling the lepidopteran pests in comparison to non-Bt. Cotton hybrids.